SANDWELL, Bernard Keble [Canadian Bookman] October 1918 - March 1919

(050)

Canadian Bookman

45 St. Alexander Street,
MONTREAL, Canada

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Nov. 2, 1918.

Sir Robert Falconer
President
Toronto University
Toronto Ont.

Dear Sir Robert:

Your excellent article came to hand to-day and is in ample time. Please accept my sincerest thanks for your kind co-operation.

Yours truly,

B K Sandwell

BKS/WM

(B. K. Sandwell).

October 18th, 1918

P. M. Sandwell, Esq.,

Financial Times,

343-5 Craig Street West, Montreal.

Dear Mr. Sandwell:

I will try to let you have a short article of about 1000 words as you request by the first of November. Hoping that you will have success in your new venture, with kind regards,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

The Reading Public in Canada

One of the greatest pleasures that a reader has in visiting London or Edinburgh is to stray into a book-shop and browse among the latest books. To read reviews of books in the literary columns of papers and magazines is one thing; to pick up the book, glance through the table of contents and turn over the pages is something quite different. Reviews do make one buy books, but for one that is bought through a review three are bought by the casual reader who casually picks it from the counter ~~some~~ well printed volumes on a new publication of which he has not heard. A book-loving people, a city that has readers, will boast of its good book-shops. Is it the shops that make the readers, or the readers who make the shops? If any one that it is the readers who make the shops. If so the reason that we have so few good book-shops in Canadian cities is that we have so few readers who are interested in books. As a Canadian I regret to own that we are far behind the old Land in this respect. Possibly on the average our cities have as many good readers as those of the United States, but we have a long way to go before we get within sight of Londn or Edinburgh. Of course by readers I do not mean newspaper readers. We have some very creditable journals, and papers are read widely and intelligently. On the whole the readers exercise independent judgment and are not bound to the Editorial opinion over slavishly. Our people also who read these papers are not war provincial that people of the same class in the old country: they are just as able to exercise robust common-sense, and they do so. But it is very doubtful whether they appreciate the style and logical development of an Editorial as the educated Englishman does, though they will take the substance out of it quite as quickly. Nor the genuine book-lover does enjoy style. Half of his pleasure comes from the way in which the idea is expressed: he enjoys the art that prevents simple things from becoming the obvious, that finds words that are not worn like finger coins for the current coin of composition, that fits the thought with the exact expression, that completes and rounds out in a sentence or paragraph one idea before confusing it with another.

A person who has enjoys the literary art in this way sense will always be a reader, and as he grows older he will appreciate the truth of the words which are inscribed on the Toronto Public Library, Non vfert quam multos sed quam bonos habeas libros. The young man is impatient to read many the books that the world is talking about; the older man is content to sit of an evening with his favourite writer brooding over the lines that are very familiar. This He does not weary of fine art and sententious or shrewd wise observations. A combination of human wisdom and with chaste and adequate words is another to bring never failing pleasure.

But this leads me to remark further that readers the good reader is has not necessarily a voracious appetite - he is critical, selective, makes his own choice, and enjoys himself in doing so. He is not eager to find from the shopman what the best seller of the past month has been, nor does he contribute very largely to make the fortune of the popular novelist or witty essayist. I fancy however that a reader's taste may be judged in a measure at least by the his skill his liking for the Essay, for it desires its pith and essence lies in its treatment of a well chosen and modest moderate theme within the compass of a modest compass. An Essay effective essay must possess exhibit literary skill. ℙ But a good reader also finds pleasure on occasion at least by wandering through the ampler spaces of periods of history or fields of thought set out in a series of volumes, or in good biography. There are times when one finds it a labour to thread one's way through the narrow & well trimmed hedges of the succinct and closely-compacted argument, as in a small garden plot where a clever gardener has used every inch of space. Then one turns to the leisurely writer who is not afraid to carry one off into some comfortable digression, and when he has quietly explored it will bring one back again in his own good time to the main highway of his discourse.

Such a reader desires wishes to own the book he enjoys and he also delights in a good piece of workmanship - well printed, and well bound and well illustrated. In the matter of book-making we Canadians have still along way to go. We have to learn much in the art of printing, and even more in the art and practice of binding. We have not yet the traditions of a great bookmaking centre such as Edinburgh or Boston, nor the

here we not yet had the generations of workmen who have handed on the technique from age to age and who knew exactly how to use their instruments with such precision that they pass from mere the boundary that separates art from mere utility. This lack is also due in measure to the fact that we have in Canada few people who buy a book fine book for the book's sake. If many of our people in Canada loved books well enough to spend money upon handsome or even well printed volumes, we should before long have publishers who would undertake to produce them, and skilled workmen who would spend take pains upon them and take pleasure in turning them their finished artistry.

¶ But fortunately the reader genuine reader is not dependent upon an expensive edition to satisfy his taste. No one can satisfy his get his pleasure more cheaply in these days of libraries Series for the average man which are within the reach of all. Nor are these cheap editions so carelessly produced for the most part. Their large circulation makes it possible to print them well and to bind them in convenient form and often artistic form. And in peace time the cost of carriage + the the customs duty are so small that even in the Canadian village these good books can be placed at a low small price. It is not therefore for lack of books, beautiful and cheap though for the most part imported, that we have not a wide large reading public in Canada. It is because we have not developed well enough sufficient a taste for literature. My experience leads me to believe that there are more women than men in Canada who are good readers. Possibly they have more time, though that is doubtful when household duties are so manifold and constant: I rather think that women make more time, and that men put the spend the hours on politics or in clubs: whereby they learn it is true average human nature within the narrow range of their own home experience to which much direct fact, but they miss the wider experience of humanity which is preserved in literature, history, and the philosophic speculations and the idealisms of men; and therefore, while effective for the many things that can be settled by the judgment of the man-on-the-street, they are not able to form the well-balanced decisions judgments on human affairs and policies which are determined by ideas that which find only occasional embodiment in the narrow limited circle in which they move.

AD 326 – Pettman.

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CANADIAN BOOKMAN

Montreal

EDITORIAL OFFICE

B30, BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

Jan. 25, 1919.

Sir Robert Falconer
President of Toronto University
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir Robert:

I am not writing to ask you to make a free contribution to the Canadian Bookman, much as we should appreciate receiving one. I know that you are a busy man and I am extremely grateful for what you have already done for us.

I want to ask you whether you will recommend the Canadian Bookman to the friendly attention of Lord Charnwood, and sound him as to the prospect of our being able to get an article from him, which we should not be able to pay for at the rates to which he is entitled, but which might give him an opportunity to express himself on some subjects which English and United States periodicals would not be interested in. He may have some reflections on the literary status and prospects of the Dominion as a result of his recent trip.

I enclose a memorandum concerning our next Symposium. If it gives you an uncontrollable desire to contribute to this Symposium, so much the better; but if not I thought that perhaps you might know somebody with valuable ideas on the subject which he would be glad to express.

Yours truly,

B K Sandwell

(B. K. Sandwell).

BKS/WM.

Many thanks for your words of appreciation, just received. BKS.

CANADIAN BOOKMAN

Montreal

EDITORIAL OFFICE B30, BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

MEMORANDUM RE/SYMPOSIUM.

It is proposed to publish in the next issue of the Canadian Bookman a Symposium, similar to that in the January issue, on the question of "The Deluge of American Magazines in Canada". The object is to discuss the desirability or otherwise of the immense and growing influx or of American magazines, especially of the cheapest and most frivolous kind, into Canada; whether this is detrimental to the moral and the national feeling of Canadians; and what steps if any should be taken to mitigate it.

Contributions to this Symposium are being requested from a number of the leading business and professional men, writers and statesmen, of the Dominion.

Contributions should reach this office not later than February 15, and contain from 500 to 800 words.

January 28th, 1919

B. K. Sandwell, Esq.,
Canadian Bookman,
6 80 Board of Trade, Montreal.

Dear Mr. Sandwell:

I will write to Lord Charnwood and ask him whether he will send you an article.

I am sorry but I have already so much on hand that my credit would be seriously impaired if I undertook to write anything more in the meantime. In any case I see so little of the ordinary American Magazines that I am hardly in a position to write with regard to them. I will, however, write to Lord Charnwood and see what he can do for you. Will you please send a copy of your first edition to Lord Charnwood at Stowe House, Lichfield, England ?

Yours sincerely,

President.

March 4th, 1919

B. K. Sandwell, Esq.,

"Canadian Bookman",

E 80, Board of Trade Building,

Montreal.

Dear Mr. Sandwell:

I have just had a letter from Lord Charnwood in which he says that at present he does not feel as though he could write anything on Canadian Literature. He said that at present he has so much that he must get off his hands he cannot undertake anything more. He said he would, however, keep it in mind and if there is anything that he feels suitable he will perhaps send something bye and bye.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

President.